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BALDOCK URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

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ANNUAL REPORT
of the
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
for the year
1958

Baldock U.D.C.
Council Offices,
Baldock,
(Telephone: Baldock 3221).

P U B L I C H E A L T H S T A F F

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH (also Divisional M.O. Herts. C.C.).

VICTOR R. WALKER, M.B., Ch.B., B.Sc., D.P.H.,
Divisional Health Office,
12 Brand Street,
Hitchin.
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PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR.

RONALD A. D. GATES, M.A.P.H.I.

RODENT OPERATOR.

J. REDHOUSE.

BALDOCK URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

By direction of Ministry Circular 22/58 I submit a report on the health of your district for the year 1958.

The vital statistics again give a very favourable local picture. The very low death rate of 7.5 again indicates the younger-than-average local age distribution and application of the comparability factor (1.34) supplied by the Registrar General gives a standardised death rate of 10.1.

For 1958 the live birth rate of (20.2) markedly exceeds the national rate (16.4). The stillbirth rate and the infant mortality rate are this year seen to be less favourable than the national figures.

There was no serious local occurrence of infectious disease during the year.

I would again acknowledge having received during the year every consideration and help from your Council and its Officers.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

V. R. WALKER.

District Medical Officer of Health.

June, 1959.

SECTION A

LOCAL STATISTICS

Area of District	...	...	...	...	...	542 acres.
Population - Registrar General's Estimate for mid-1958	...	...	...	...	...	7,090
Number of separately rated hereditaments at 31st March, 1959	...	...	...	...	...	2,312
Number of separate dwellings (included in above figure) at 31st December, 1958	...	...	...	...	...	1,812
Rateable Value at 1st April, 1959						£73,973
Sum Represented by a Penny Rate	...	...	...	...	...	£272.5.10

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1958

BALDOCK Comparable
URBAN rates for
DISTRICT England & Wales

LIVE BIRTHS

	<u>Totals</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
(Legitimate	134	63	71
(Illegitimate	<u>9</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>
(All	<u>143</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>75</u>

Rate per 1,000 of the estimated
resident population 20.2 16.4

STILLBIRTHS

	<u>Totals</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
(Legitimate	6	4	2
(Illegitimate	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
(All	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>

Rate per 1,000 total
(live and still) Births 40.2 21.6

TOTAL LIVE & STILLBIRTHS

<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
<u>149</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>77</u>

DEATHS

<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
<u>53</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>23</u>

Rate per 1,000 of the estimated
resident population 7.5 11.7

INFANT DEATHS

	<u>Totals</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Under 4 weeks	2	-	2
Over 4 weeks under 1yr.	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>-</u>
(All	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>

Infant mortality rate per 1,000
live births (total) ... 35.0 22.5

Infant mortality rate per 1,000
live births (legitimate) ... 37.3

Infant mortality rate per 1,000
live births (illegitimate) Nil

Neo Natal (first 4 weeks) mortality
rate per 1,000 live births 14.0 16.2

Illegitimate live births per cent of
total live births ... 6.7

No. of maternal deaths (incl. abortion) None

Maternal mortality rate per 1,000
Live and still births Nil 0.43

Deaths from Cancer (all sites)	...	11
Deaths from Measles	...	None
Deaths from Whooping Cough	...	None
Deaths from other infective and parasitic diseases	...	None

Comment on Vital Statistics for the Year

The estimated mid-year population showed a further increase of 130 persons. Live births (143) were 26 more than for 1957 while the figure for deaths (53) was 10 less than the figure for the previous year.

SECTION B GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES

No important change occurred during the year.

SECTION C SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

1. Water Supply. All premises in the district are provided with a direct piped supply of water, which is treated and supplied in bulk to the Council's Undertaking by the First Garden City Ltd. The supply has been satisfactory both in quantity and quality and results of chemical analyses and bacteriological examinations of samples have also been satisfactory.
2. Sewerage & Sewage Disposal. No change.
3. Rivers and Streams. No change.
4. Closet Accommodation. No change.
5. Public Cleansing. On the 30th August the Council's new freighter, which is of the fore and aft type and of a 25 cubic yard capacity, came into use. This freighter replaced the old 13 cubic yard capacity vehicle and because of its larger capacity has resulted in less time spent in carrying refuse to the tip and more time in collection. A weekly collection has now been established and this has resulted in the elimination of complaints of delay in collection.
6. Caravan Sites. There are two sites within the area for which consents were granted under the Town & Country Planning Act, 1947. One site is within the curtilage of Kayser Bondor Ltd, adjacent to their sports field and has provision for six trailer type caravans. There is on the site water closet accommodation and washing facilities for the occupants together with a piped water supply and facilities for the storage and collection of domestic refuse. This site is well maintained and the general circumstances satisfactory from the sanitary point of view.

The second site is in Linekiln Lane and is for 30 caravans. Although this site received planning permission in 1956 subject to the provision of a sanitation block, the Council have had difficulty in enforcing this condition. Meetings between the Council's officers and the owners of the site indicate the possibility that a block will be erected in 1959.
7. Swimming Pool (Privately owned). During the summer months, when the pool was in use, samples were taken at regular intervals but it was found that as the pool had been reconstructed and enlarged in 1957 the existing chlorine plant was not capable of inserting sufficient chlorine into the water to provide a high enough free chlorine figure. During these months liquid chlorine was also added to ensure that the water would be bacteriologically pure at all times. At the end of the season the factory undertook to call in the manufacturers for their advice.
8. Rodent Control. Normal rodent control work and treatment was carried out and only minor infestations were found. All the Council's undertakings received regular attention and the soil sewers showed a marked absence of infestation.

9. Sanitary Inspections of the Area (other than Dwellinghouses and food premises).

(a) Number of inspections carried out under the Factories Act	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	30
(b) Number of inspections carried out under the Petroleum Acts	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	13
(c) Number of inspections carried out in connection with drainage and sewerage	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	29
(d) Number of inspections carried out in connection with water supply and sampling	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	16
(e) Miscellaneous inspections	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	29
(f) Number of nuisances investigated and dealt with	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	17
(g) Number of investigations regarding infectious diseases	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	5

10. Factories & Workplaces. Routine work continued and special attention was given to those factories requiring but not having Certificates as to Adequate Means of Escape in case of fire.

11. Clean Air Act, 1957. During the year visits were made to all boiler plants and the engineers and stokers co-operation sought in the abatement of smoke. Very little nuisance has occurred due to the larger plants being oil or coke fed.

SECTION D

HOUSING

Council Housing Schemes

- (a) In April the last of the 105 Gregory traditional type houses on the Anchor Field Estate was completed and occupied.
- (b) During the year the Council discussed at length the problems confronting them in any future development of the town. The available sites within the town were rapidly being developed. The matter was taken up with the County Council with a view to negotiating the purchase of 60 acres of land scheduled for residential development in the County Development Plan and situated outside the eastern boundary of the town in the Rural District of Hitchin.
- (c) The Council gave consideration to the future development of the available land at the Anchor Field Estate and resolved to build houses for sale.
- (d) Consideration was also given to the provision of further dwellings for old people. Suitable sites in the town were investigated and finally it was resolved to proceed with the purchase of two sites near the town centre.

Private Dwellings

A total of 14 private dwellings were completed during the year.

Slum Clearance

During the year the Council reviewed their Slum Clearance proposals submitted to the Minister and approved by him in January, 1956. These proposals had been based upon a preliminary survey made in 1955. As a result of a subsequent detailed inspection of all the houses included in these proposals, many houses had been found not to be unfit for human habitation or capable of being represented as Clearance Areas. A number of unfit houses had already been dealt with and during 1958 four houses were demolished and one was closed. A total of 6 unfit houses remain and these will be dealt with as soon as suitable alternative accommodation can be found for the occupants.

Rent Act, 1957

The Rent Act which came into force in July 1957 does not seem to have caused much difficulty to either landlords or tenants. Tenants have not generally required landlords to expedite repairs but in the small number of notices from tenants undertakings have readily been given by

the landlords. The absence of much repair work is undoubtedly due to the reasonable condition of the tenanted houses in the district.

Improvement Grants

During the year four applications for improvement grants were submitted and approved; one was later withdrawn. A total of 24 grants have been made since the inception of the scheme in 1949.

Overcrowding - Housing Act, 1957

Two houses were found to be statutory overcrowded within the provisions of the Housing Act, 1957. The overcrowding was caused by 2 families living together in the same house but was abated after informal action in one case and the serving of a notice under the Housing Act in the other.

Inspection of Dwellinghouses during the Year

(1)	Number of dwellinghouses inspected (for housing defects under Public Health or Housing Acts)	26
	Number of inspections made for that purpose	93
(2)	Number of dwellinghouses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	7
(3)	Number of dwellinghouses (exclusive of those referred to under (2) above) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	9
(4)	Number of dwellinghouses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices under the Public Health or Housing Acts:-	
	(a) By owners	5
	(b) By Local Authority in default of owners	-
(5)	Number of defective dwellinghouses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or its officers	14

SECTION E

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

- (1) There were no special Clean Food Campaigns but food shops and food preparing premises were regularly inspected and opportunity taken to give advise on the clean handling of food to the personnel concerned. The Food Hygiene Regulations were brought to the notice of all occupants and in a number of cases informal action taken to bring the premises up to a satisfactory standard.
- (2) The type of food premises are as follows:-
Butchers, 4; cafes, restaurants, snack bars, 7; confectioners, 6; dairies, 1; fish shops, 3; greengrocers and fruiterers 4; grocers and provision merchants, 4; bakehouses, 4; canteens, 4.
- (3) Premises registered under Section 16 of the Food & Drugs Act, 1955, Sale and storage of ice cream 15 (no ice cream is manufactured in the district); manufacture of meat products, 1.
- (4) There are no slaughterhouses in the district.
- (5) No food poisoning instances were reported in the year.
- (6) The results of all 15 ice cream samples taken were Grade 1.
- (7) The specified areas Scheme of 1954 remains in force. Under this, only Designated Milks such as Tuberculin Tested, Pasteurised and Sterilised may be sold in the district.

During the year four firms were issued with supplementary Licences to retail milk in Baldock from premises elsewhere. There is only one dairy and this is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture.

- (8) During the year 21 lbs. of imported canned meat was condemned as unfit for human consumption.

SECTION F. Prevalence of, and Control over, Infectious and other Diseases.

For the year 1958 totals of acute infectious diseases notified (after correction) were; Scarlet fever 5; Dysentery 1, Erysipelas 1; Puerperal Pyrexia 1 and Infectious Hepatitis 1. Therefore apart from the few sporadic cases of Scarlet fever mild in type and confined to infant age, an almost complete local absence of serious infectious disease is seen for the year.

Notification of Whooping cough, as compared with measles, has in the last few years become remarkably infrequent, suggesting such illness now reduced in severity to a marked degree. Although it is far reaching to claim such reduction to be wholly due to the recent adoption of vaccination of infants against pertussis the measure continues to be popularly accepted and valued by mothers. Also, although immunisation procedures against both diphtheria and whooping cough have tended to be overshadowed by the recently introduced vaccination against poliomyelitis, there would seem no marked falling-off in acceptance by mothers of infant age children.

TUBERCULOSIS

New Cases and Deaths during the year 1958

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0 - 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1 - 5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5 - 15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15 - 25	1	-(2)	-	-	-	-	-	-
25 - 35	1+(2)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
35 - 45	-(2)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
45 - 55	-(1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
55 - 65	-	-(1)	-	-	-	-	-	-
65 & over	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Not known	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals:	2+(5)	-(3)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deaths allocated by the Registrar General after final transfers					-	-	-	-

Footnote: In addition to the new cases first notified within the district there is shown (in brackets) additional figures of cases transferred to the local registrar from other areas.

Comment: New local notifications are confined to 2 cases, both young adult males, for the previous year such figure was 3.

No death from any form of tuberculosis occurred in the district during the year.

June, 1959. V. R. WALKER.
District Medical Officer of Health.